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ABSTRACT

Social bilinguals (second language learners in a linguistic minority) and cultural bilinguals (foreign language learners) often learn side by side in the same classroom, making syllabus planning and choice of teaching methodology difficult. Adopting a bilingual approach and exploring the semantic and discourse aspects of language can overcome the obstacles created by individual bilingualism and group multilingualism and provide a vehicle for language across the curriculum. The approach is based on the assumptions that cognitive development is the basis of language development, cognitive and native language development of peers is comparable across language groups, and it is easier for learners to incorporate new concepts into their knowledge structure if they are mediated by a language they know well, i.e., the native language. The technique is to make teaching both subject-matter-centered and student-centered, using texts available in parallel form in both languages, matching the student's cognitive ability, satisfying syllabus requirements, and suitable for autonomous or small-group instruction. These texts can then be adapted to teach subject matter, concept learning, and discourse to students with differing language needs. Examples of this text adaptation are provided. (MSE)

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TOPIC CENTRED SUBJECT/LANGUAGE LEARNING MATERIALS AND THEIR USE

Marta Rado

Paper to be presented at the RELC Regional Seminar on Language across the Curriculum. Singapore, 22-26 April 1985.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with cross-cultural/linguistic learning situations in which two types of learners may be involved. These are the second language (L2) learners, or in my terminology, social bilinguals, namely students who are members of a linguistic minority. For them L2 learning or bilingualism is compulsory if they are to participate in the affairs of the wider community. In other words for these students knowing the family language is not enough, they must also know the dominant or official language. Their bilingualism arises out of their social situation. The other group are the foreign language (Fl) learners or cultural bilinguals. By contrast these students have a choice, they can elect to learn another language for professional or personal reasons, but their everyday life would not be greatly affected if they remained monolingual.

Social and cultural bilinguals often learn side by side in the same classroom which makes syllabus planning and choice of teaching methodology across the curriculum very difficult. In this situation it seems almost impossible to apply the principle of building on students' existing knowledge. I would like to demonstrate that the obstacles created by individual bilingualism and group multilingualism can be overcome by adopting a bilingual approach and by exploring the semantic and discourse aspects of language.

The approach I am proposing is based on the following assumptions: a) cognitive development is the basis of language development; b) cognitive development and mother tongue development of peers is comparable across language groups; c) it is easier for learners to incorporate new concepts into their knowledge structure or semantic memory if these are mediated by a language they know well. (For the sake of simplicity I shall refer to this language as the mother tongue or first language (L1).) In principle therefore one can teach similar topics at a similar level of complexity to peers through the medium of the mother tongue. This is in fact what happens across national boundaries

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throughout the world. The question is how we can do the same thing within the same school system, within the same school, and what is even more challenging, within the same classroom.

The answer is to make teaching, topic- and student-centred. This is congruent with present trends in language teaching methodology which stress the importance of language, not simply as communication, but as communication which is significant for the learner whose active involvement in the learning process is essential for effective learning.

I am using topic here as a synonym for subject matter. The course of action I propose is an interactive one between cognitive and language development, and if students are bilingual, a planned alternation between their first language (L1) and their second language (L2). The alternation must not be confused with haphazard language switching.

In the discussion which follows, it is assumed that students are in the 10+ age group and are capable of handling written texts. Ideally such texts should have the following characteristics:

1. Texts should be available in parallel form in students' L1 and L2.
2. The content of the books should match students' cognitive ability.
3. Topics should satisfy syllabus requirements.
4. Texts should be so designed that they are suitable for autonomous or small group learning.

Autonomous learning changes the teacher's role from that of provider of information to that of creator of an optimum learning environment. But students can only share the responsibility for their own learning if they possess the appropriate study skills. Munby (1978: 176-84) has given us a taxonomy of fifty four language skills. These include: understanding relations between parts of texts through lexical cohesion devices, interpreting texts by going outside it, identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse, selective extraction of relevant points from a text, basic reference skills (e.g. understanding and use of headings, numbering, footnotes), skimming to obtain the gist of a text, scanning to locate specially required information, and transcoding information presented in diagrammatic display. The list is not exhaustive.

The mastery of these study skills should have the additional effect of heightening students' linguistic awareness, namely, "the ability to reflect on language and treat it as an object of thought". (Myhill and Herriman, 1980: 110). As Read explains

> The performance of adapting, manipulating, segmenting, correcting and judging language seem to play an important role in at least three processes: learning to read and write, learning a non-native language, and responding to social expectations.
>
> (1978: 65)

Further he states that

> linguistic awareness is a crucial part of that self-awareness and capacity for self-criticism which may underlie our sense of our own history and our thinking ... (and so) forms part of the basis of our humanity and our worth.
>
> (1978: 80)

Designing a syllabus for language across the curriculum implies the coordination of the mastery of

- new concepts
- morphosyntax
- language use
- discourse features
- study skills.

The particular elements selected for attention from these areas will be governed by the topic and the learner's knowledge base, needs and interests. Because of the global nature of cognition the selected elements cannot be treated in isolation but can be highlighted. According to Slobin this is what happens in the course of L1 acquisition.

> It is if a spotlight moves over each grammatical element; when a particular form is focused on in the course of development...With mastery the light moves on.
>
> (Slobin, 1975: 19)

LEARNING SUBJECT MATTER

Today in language teaching methodology there is some agreement what the elements of a language teaching syllabus should be. There is less certainty how to organise the syllabus, that is where to start. As I believe in the

precedence of conceptual development I suggest starting with the subject matter, that is with meaning. I shall call this procedure a semantic approach.

If students are sub-divided into small homogeneous groups they can engage together in a variety of activities which help to elucidate meaning. If some sub-groups and the teacher don't share the same language other helpers can be recruited, such as teacher aides (their use is spreading in Australia), parents, other bilingual adults and some bilingual students.

Discussion questions and helpful ideas could be given to students in their L1 or bilingually on tape and on handouts. The preparation of such instructions is time-consuming for the teacher but a good investment for the future as such instructions can be re-used. At relevant points students could be given check lists for composing their own ideas with more informed opinions for the reinforcement of the learning that has taken place and the correction of misconceptions. Such check lists demanding YES/NO answers could help the teacher in monitoring students' work.

Social Sciences

I would like to illustrate how the meaning potential of a given topic can be explored. For this purpose I have chosen a book in the social science area 'Reading About Aborigines' (Rado, 1981). This text is suitable for the 10 to 13 years age group. The book focuses attention on the Aboriginal life-style and cultural patterns before the arrival of the Europeans. Students are introduced to some of the dreamtime stories which reflect Aboriginal thinking about their beginnings, the land, religion and conduct. These are supported where possible by known facts so that the student can begin to understand a little of the way the Aborigines present their own history in relation to the evidence essential to records based on modern science. Connections are made between the nomadic life-style of Aboriginal groups and the geographical features of Australia which have determined such an existence. Because this unit is aimed at increasing students' awareness of the Aborigines as a unique and necessary feature of Australia's history, distinctions are made between life before European settlement and the enforced changes after 1788. Reflections upon this aspect of colonisation or, as some say, invasion of Australia opens the way for extended examinations of multiculturalism, race relations, transplanted cultures and human rights.

Students are challenged throughout this book to define and refine their own attitudes towards the land, cultural pluralism, the Aborigines and the sacrifices required socially and physically for sociotechnical progress.

In many ways, the issues raised or implied in 'Aborigines' confront universal problems of today's world and suggest a positive way of seeing and accepting the differences between nations, races, cultures and individuals.

There are many ways in which the information in this book can be extended to meet the requirements of a social studies or history unit as well as vividly demonstrating various aspects of Aboriginal life for the students.

Activities might involve

1. Dramatising the stories told in the book.

2. Researching more Aboriginal stories and comparing them with other narratives, e.g. Babylonian, Chinese, Indian, Greek, English. Where are these similar? What are the basic differences in attitudes towards, say, violence, marriage, hunting?

3. Finding books containing early Australian paintings to build up a composite picture of how the European regarded Aborigines. Were they respected, feared, admired? Do pictures show them as proud or frightened? Do we see the women and children?

4. Dance has been (and still is in many ways) an important form of communication in many societies. And so it is for Aborigines. Some students could select an event from their day, or week, and devise a descriptive dance which the audience can translate into a story or drawing or song.

5. Much Aboriginal life relied on the ability to survive in a variety of terrains and climatic conditions. Today in a technological society we have little need of such skills and yet we constantly hear of individuals who die as a result of not being prepared for emergencies. Take the class on a country walk where they can try to find water, shelter, and edible foods. Aborigines still hand down factual and conceptual information via elder to child, or expert to inexpert. Many students will have a particular

field of expertise which they could share with others. Students could benefit greatly by learning about things from their peers and a learning exchange could be established.

6. Research projects which could be carried out by individual students or small groups might look at the story of Incas, Zulus, Saxons, Eskimoes, Tibetans etc. Points of similarity and difference could be recorded against the known facts about the Aborigines and a composite picture built up to reveal trends.

(Suggestions for teaching about Aborigines are based on Rado, 1984a: 51-53.)

Some of the activities mentioned above would be conducted in the L1, others also in L2 in such a way that the languages are separated into blocks of learning/teaching times.

Home Economics

The book 'Eating Patterns around the World' (O'Brien and Rado, forthcoming) suggests other activities besides discussion. These include surveys, interviews, note taking, descriptions, cooking and preserving food. In sum, different topics lead to a variety of teaching/learning strategies.

Home economics is a vital subject as it deals with basic human needs. These needs are universal. Consequently, Home Economics can ideally be infused with cultural elements by demonstrating the commonality as well as the diversity of our food habits. The common elements across cultures are: a) the body's need for food, b) the preparation of food, c) the eating of food, and d) food vocabulary. The diversity resides in the way the need for food is satisfied, the modes of preparation, the conventions accompanying the eating of food and the expressions used in referring to food.

Home Economics is not only a suitable topic to stimulate cross-cultural interest but it is also an admirable vehicle for language development. This can be conveniently demonstrated in connection with learning vocabulary.

CONCEPT LEARNING

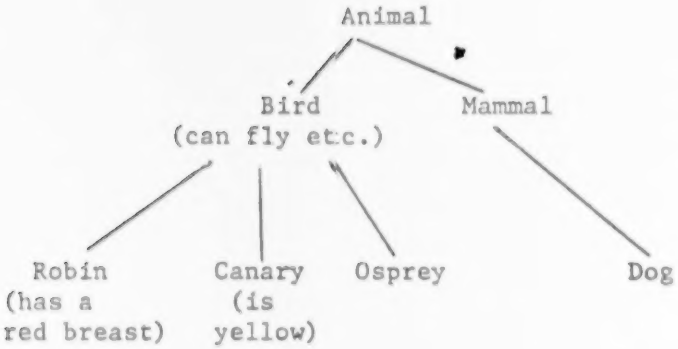
A corollary to understanding new concepts is the learning of new vocabulary. Here the understanding how semantic memory works, that is an insight into the structure of knowledge, how knowledge is stored, cross-referenced and indexed, should prove helpful. However, it must be remembered that suggestions about semantic memory are perforce tentative (Cohen, 1977).

One ability which helps in processing information and aids recall is our tendency to organise items into categories. This skill can be harnessed into a learning device by giving students tasks of regrouping vocabulary. For example, in the course of studying Home Economics foods can be grouped according to the nutrients they contain, the type of foods they are, the manner of production, preservation and cooking, ingredients of a recipe, personal (dis)like, the meals when they are eaten and foods that only animals eat. In personal terms students can make lists of the ingredients they need to prepare a meal for their family or for special visitors, the food they would take with them for a picnic or a weekend away from home. These lists would show what semantic fields words share. They can also form the basis for conversations, therefore verb lists should also receive attention together with other form classes. Conversations about recipes, the price of food, reminders of what not to forget and complaints or praise about the quality of food help to contextualise vocabulary items. If students are invited to suggest their own categorisation schemes and conversations this could develop into an amusing and enriching learning experience.

Categorisation is only one way of showing semantic connections. From among the other models of the structure of semantic memory I would like to mention two that can serve as a basis for classroom activities. One is the Network Model which uses nodes and links in a hierarchical tree structure to display the class membership of words in terms of super- and sub-ordination and the typical properties of words. Such a model also points to the need of immediately contextualising new vocabulary, preferably in frequently occurring contexts. Figure 1 shows a segment of a hierarchical network tree, adapted from Collins and Quillian by Cohen (1977: 13).

Figure 1

Network Model



Students could be asked to draw network model trees and to write sentences illustrating the typical properties of words.

The other model that could be helpful is the Dictionary Model. It focuses on the semantic features of words (e.g. animate/inanimate, young/old) which determine the types of words they can combine with in sentences. Semantic features are language specific and lend themselves to cross-linguistic comparisons.

The Dictionary Model could inspire a variety of exercises, e.g. judging word combinations possible or impossible, constructing semantic feature tables like the following:

Table 1 : Dictionary Model

Word Category:	Man	Woman	Boy	Lioness	Rock	Love
TEST	FEATURE LIST					
1. abstract	-	-	-	-	-	+
2. animate	+	+	+	+		
3. human	+	+	+	-		
4. male	+	-	+	-		
5. adult	+	+	-	+		

(Smith, 1971: 154)

One relation that plays a role in discourse is that of given and new information. The new information is what we want to draw attention to. The given information is what can be taken for granted because it is based on shared knowledge. If the given information is based on assumptions that are culturally not shared by the learner this may impede the understanding of texts. The new-given information dichotomy does not only play an important role in comprehension but also in writing. It forms the basis of clear expository prose. Consequently, it should be profitable to contrast new and given information. This can be done by systematic questioning, first eliciting answers containing the given information and later by asking for new information.

Example:

> As more and more Aboribines arrived in the north, they moved to other areas to find food. The Aborigines gradually spread group by group over the continent.
>
> (Rado, 1981: 7)

Asking for given information:

Question	Answer
Who arrived in the north?	More and more Aborigines (arrived in the north).
Who moved to other areas?	The Aborigines (moved to other areas).
Who spread over the continent?	The Aborigines (spread over the continent).

Asking for new information:

Question	Answer
Where did the Aborigines arrive?	(They arrived) in the north.
Why did they move to other areas?	(They moved to other areas) to find food.
How did they spread over the continent?	(They spread) group by group (over the continent).

Note that both complete sentence and fragment answers are acceptable.

The above question-answer pairs are sentence based. But the concept of new and given information also enters into the sequencing of sentences. In order to avoid confusion I shall refer to the constancy of themes as topic (T) and the highlighting of new information as focus (F). The recognition of this relationship is not new. The Greeks referred to it as theme and rheme.

The manner of sequencing topics and focuses varies across languages and modes of discourse. Observing how they alternate might give students a useful insight into the creation of texts.

The following illustrates a frequently occurring pattern in 'Reading about Aborigines'. The topic is stated in the first sentence. Subsequent clauses refer to it.

Clause	Topic	Focus
Naruni was a young girl	T1	F1
who had been promised in marriage to an older man.	T1	F2
Naruni did not want to marry the old man	T1	F3
so she ran away	T1	F4
and she was changed into a duck.	T1	F5

(Rado, 1984:31)

Students might find it interesting to record and compare topic-focus patterns in the texts they are studying.

Sequences of sentences are judged to be texts by the fact that they are coherent, in other words make sense. The topic-focus relationship plays a role in this. Although not an absolutely necessary attribute, discourse is usually also cohesive. Cohesion is mostly marked in language specific ways, but at least one device, namely ellipsis is a language universal. It occurs when "propositions are not fully realized in the grammatical forms of utterances (Shopen, 1973:65). Ellipsis in its cohesive role is based on shared knowledge or given information which is recoverable from a previous stretch of text. It is often used in conversation as a stylistic device indicating a measure of informality. It shortens the message thereby lightening the processing load. It also gives saliency to new information by isolating it. In my opinion Shopen (1973:65) is not exaggerating when he states that a "command of ellipsis is an important part of knowing a language".

Combining the study of ellipsis with that of the form and function of speech acts can be linguistically and culturally most illuminating.

I have already given examples of ellipted answers in the question-answer pairs based on the text on Aborigines. Now I would like to analyse a piece of conversation in more detail to deepen the understanding of ellipsis and speech acts and demonstrate some classroom exercises/activities. The conversation I have chosen revolves around the speech acts: invitation, acceptance and refusal.

Characters: Two school girls

Setting: In front of school lockers.

Girl 1	Where are you going?	Turn 1
Girl 2	To the canteen. Are you coming?	Turn 2
Girl 1	Why not?	Turn 3
Girl 2	Come on then!	Turn 4
Girl 1	Wait a minute. I can't find my money.	Turn 5
Girl 2	I'll lend you some.	Turn 6
Girl 1	No, thank you.	Turn 7
Girl 2	You can pay it back later.	Turn 8
Girl 1	No, I don't really want anything.	Turn 9
Girl 2	Suit yourself.	Turn 10

Make the presentation lively and ensure comprehension. Flashcards, audio-motor unit technique or role play would be suitable.

Begin the discussion by asking students to state how many turns at talk there are in this conversation and how they are distributed between the speakers. After they have ascertained that both girls have five turns continue the analysis by looking at the opening and closing speech acts. In this dialogue the conversational opener is an invitation which is just one of the speech acts that can fulfil an opening function. In contrast the closing speech act of leave taking or saying farewell is one of the frequently used speech acts to fulfil a closing function.

The turns in this conversation are short and tend to coincide with a single sentence; some are fragments. It might be illuminating for the students to look at each turn and decide whether it would be reduced or expanded and in what way?

Example: Expansions

Turn 2: I am going to the canteen. Would you like to come with me?

Turn 8: I'll lend you some. You can pay it back later. I've got plenty of money.

Turn 9: No, I don't really want to eat or drink anything, I had a big breakfast.

Turn 10: Suit yourself! I can easily find someone else.

Reductions

Turn 5: Oh, where is my money?

Turn 7: No.

Turn 9: No.

Ask students to compare the expanded and reduced turns with the original and discuss any change in formality and tone.

Example: Expansions

Turn 2 Is the expanded version too formal for this situation and therefore stylistically not appropriate?

Turn 8 Is the inducement stronger by adding the reassurance that the girl has plenty of money to lend?

Turn 10 Is the refusal more acceptable because it is followed by an excuse giving the reason for the refusal?

Reductions

Turn 5 Does the shorter version express greater surprise? Is it a clear refusal? Or is there no difference?

Turn 7 What is the effect of refusing without an apology?

Turn 9 What is the effect of refusing without an excuse?

There are several ellipted turns in this conversation. One of these is the first utterance of Turn 2 "To the canteen". This is a fragment which only contains the information sought. Fragments are the result of ellipsis. According to Morgan fragments have a special status in English because they

> constitute grammatical sequences, but do not conform to the speaker's intuitive notion of sentencehood...(In other respects) fragments have the properties of full sentences: they consist of elements taken from the lexicon; some sequences are judged to be well formed and some are not... there are an infinite number of such fragments...The speaker's ability to produce and interpret fragments is a matter of the same linguistic competence that enables him to deal with full sentences (1973: 720-21).

(For the use of fragments by interlanguage speakers see Rado, 1984b; forthcoming a. For discussion of ellipsis in language teaching see Rado, 1984c; 1984d.)

The close connection between fragments and the preceding text can be appreciated by comparing the same fragment answers to different types of questions. This will show that the form of the question determines the appropriateness of the answer.

Question	Fragment answer
Wh-question: Where are you going?	a) To the canteen (acceptable) b) I am (unacceptable)
Yes-no question: Are you going to the canteen?	a) To the canteen (unacceptable) b) I am (acceptable)

As an exercise students can be asked to judge the (un)acceptability of sets of question and fragment answer pairs.

Turn 3 "Why not?" is also a fragment, it is an incomplete question. Here its speech act function is acceptance in other contexts it could fulfil, the function of a request by asking for information. This is another example of how speakers rely on the context of the situation for the intended meaning of their speech acts. Speakers and hearers therefore must be familiar with the context to understand each other but also with the way speech acts are expressed.

Ask students to identify what speech act each turn represents. Remind them that speech acts can have multiple functions.

Example:

Turn 1 Conversational opener/inquiry
Turn 2 Informing/invitation
Turn 3 Acceptance
Turn 4 Directive (command)
Turn 5 Surprise/excuse
Turn 6 Offer
Turn 7 Refusal
Turn 8 Inducement/reassurance
Turn 9 Refusal/excuse
Turn 10 Closing act/offence taken

Interestingly "Why not?" is an expression that is also used in other languages. Consider

French:	"Pourquoi pas?";
German:	"Warum nicht?";
Hungarian:	"Miért nem?";
Italian:	"Perchè no?"

These expressions share the speech act function of request for causal information across languages but they can also be used as a speech act of acceptance. Students could research this question by translating the expression into a language they know and discussing it with adult native speakers with whom they are in contact.

Example:

German

Turn 1 Komm ' zur Kantine!
(Function: request/invitation)

Turn 2 Warum nicht?
(Function?)

Can Turn 3 be an acceptance in German or can it only be a request for information? As the latter, however, it only makes sense if it were a request of justification following a prohibition, namely a direction not to do something.

Example:

German

Turn 1 Komm ' nicht zur Kantine!
(Function: suasion - prohibition)

Turn 2 Warum nicht?
(Function: request for justification)

The conversation contains two refusals. For both a justification is given. The refusals involve reference to money which is a socially delicate topic in many cultures. To admit that one does not have the necessary money to participate in a social occasion can be embarrassing for both conversational partners. Excuses are difficult speech acts. The predictable routines they often contain can be profitably practised. Students could be asked to suggest excuses involving money. This could lead to a discussion of matters we don't readily talk about. Perhaps students could give examples from their own experience that illustrate differences in conversational topic restriction across cultures, or social groups. It should be remembered that social groupings need not be thought of purely in socio-economic terms. There are various groups in a society based on religion, sport or other mutually shared interests.

The fact that in speech acts the literal and intended meaning or illocutionary force do not always coincide is another area of language that should and can be explored. The separation of form and function can manifest itself in two ways. Firstly, people may say the same thing, but depending on the context, expect different interpretations from their hearers. Or, conversely people may say different things, but actually mean the same. Stylistically they adjust their speech to fit the situation and to signal their social relationship with their interlocutor(s).

THEY SAY THE SAME THING, WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Question: What is the time?

A selection of functions:
Imagine situations where this question is

1. asking for information;
2. a reminder that it is getting late;
3. a suggestion to leave;
4. an expression of surprise;
5. a plea to hurry up;
6. a request to stop an activity.

Below there are two suggestions for handling this material in class.

Procedure A

Write the functions you have selected on separate cards. List possible responses on the blackboard or on a sheet of paper. Familiarise students with the functions and the responses.

Distribute the list of responses in class. Give the pack of "function" cards to one of the students. The student chosen asks another student: "What's the time?" while holding up one of the "function" cards. The student questioned selects an appropriate answer from the list of responses or, if sufficiently advanced, improvises one. On completion of this question-answer exchange, the pack of cards can stay with one student who does all the questioning or can be passed around the class.

Example:

Question: What is the time?

Function Card	Possible Answer
1. Asking for information	A. Two o'clock.
2. A reminder that it is getting late	B. Yes, we must hurry.
3. A suggestion to leave	C. Time to go.
4. An expression of surprise	D. Later than you think.
5. A plea to hurry up	E. I am ready.
6. A request to stop an activity	F. It is not that late.

The appropriateness of answers can be judged by peers with the help of scoring sheets.

SCORING SHEET

Place a (✓) tick in the appropriate column

Name	Possible	Doubtful	Impossible
Angela			
George			
Rose			
Carlos			

Results could be ascertained by a show of hands and discussed.

Procedure B.

Students identify the situation and characters for each of the functions they have practised.

Examples:

1. A woman is sitting on the beach wearing her wristwatch. A child comes up to her and asks "What is the time?"

2. Sister and brother are getting ready to go to school. Mother asks "What is the time?"

3. Son has to be collected from sports practice. Mother thinks father has forgotten about it. She asks "What is the time?"

4. One guest at a party makes a move to leave, another asks "What is the time?"

5. Father is finishing a job, his daughter is waiting for a lift to go to the pictures with friends. She is worried that she will be late. She asks "What is the time?"

6 Children are watching a television show. Father thinks it is past their bed time; he asks "What is the time?"

Students' descriptions can be given and compared orally. They can also be written down individually or as a group effort and edited by the students with the help of the teacher, to make them fully informative and grammatically correct.

Such improved versions can then be collected, reproduced and shared by students. The different versions can be compared, judged and elaborated further.

The fact that the same utterance may have a multiplicity of functions can be stressed by asking students to think of additional functions for the question "What is the time?" If teachers feel the topic has been exhausted, other examples of questions with possible multiple functions can be practised.

THEY SAY DIFFERENT THINGS, BUT MEAN THE SAME

Request: You want a cup of tea. How do you go about getting it?

Examples of requests:

1. I want a cup of tea please.
2. The kettle is boiling.
3. May I have a cup of tea?
4. Could I have a cup of tea, please.
5. I would love a cup of tea.
6. All I want is a cup of tea.
7. I would give anything for a cup of tea.
8. Where do you keep your tea?
9. The last time I drank tea was this morning.
10. Tea is what you need this time of the day.
11. I have been telling my friends about your wonderful tea collection.
12. Tea is the best drink on a hot day.
13. You and my mother are the only people who make a good cup of tea.
14. What about a cup of tea?
15. Whose turn is it to make a cup of tea?

You might like to add to this list.

Ask students to tick those forms of the request they might use themselves, and discuss with them to whom they would be speaking, when and where.

The forms of these requests are influenced by the situation. Consider the following possibilities.

Examples of situations.

		Request number
A. Husband to wife.	e.g.	2
B. Teenage son to mother at home.		
C. Nephew to aunt he is visiting.		
D. Customer in restaurant.		
E. Unexpected guest who drops in at dinner time.		
F. Friend who is a regular visitor.		
G. Walking around town with a friend.		
H. On a camping holiday.		
I. Talking to a friend's mother.		
J. Office manager to his secretary.		
K. Hospital patient to nurse.		
L. Sick person to relative.		
M. Visiting relative.		
N. Grandmother to grandaughter.		
O. Passenger to air hostess.		
P. One workmate to another.		
Q. Teacher visiting a sick student's family.		

You might like to add to this list.

Ask student to match requests with situations by placing the corresponding number of the request in the appropriate column. More than one request form could be appropriate for a given situation and the same form could serve several situations. This needs to be discussed in class.

Follow up the matching exercise with the provision of an appropriate answer for each request. This too can be treated as a matching exercise. Alternatively a "brain-storming" session could be arranged leading to creative work on the part of the students.

Examples of answers of compliance or acceptance.

1. Here you are./Won't be a minute.
2. Tea will be ready in a minute./Just a sec.
3. With pleasure./Anything else we can offer you?
4. Yes, sir./Of course.
5. Milk and sugar?/Why didn't you say so earlier?
6. We'll soon fix that/You are easy to please.
7. It's coming/you won't have to.
8. Don't bother, I'll get it./You are the guest, I'll look after it.
9. Why didn't you say so before, I could have made it earlier./ We'll soon remedy that.
10. I think so too. I'll make some./I agree, I was just going to offer you some.
11. Which one would you like this time?/Make your choice.
12. I couldn't agree more. It will be ready in a minute./Right, let's have some.
13. We'll soon see whether you still think so./Let's put it to the test.
14. Don't be impatient! I'm getting it./Great idea!
15. I suppose it's mine./Sorry, I forgot.

You might like to add to this list.

On completion of pairing questions and answers, students role play the resulting mini-dialogues.

Students forming the audience identify the characters in the dialogues, e.g. grandmother and grandaughter or passenger and air hostess. Plausibility of identification is ascertained and discussed. Students judge the standard of the role playing with the help of a scoring sheet.

Students could be asked to suggest other examples of saying different things, but meaning the same. When they do this they should identify the speech act, the characters and the situations. This should highlight sources of stylistic variation in language.

Requests are not only fulfilled, they are also refused.

Examples of answers of non-compliance or refusal to provide a cup of tea.

1. I'm too busy.
2. Look after it!
3. I'm afraid we only have coffee.
4. There is no one here to make it.
5. So would I, but the tin is empty.
6. I'm afraid you have to wait for the tea break.
7. I'm afraid you'll have to wait until we get home.
8. Nowhere, I don't drink it.
9. I'm sorry but I can't help you.
10. Not really, iced water is better.
11. I have given it away. It seems I am allergic to tea.
12. Whose silly idea is that?
13. Why don't you ask your mother then to make you some?
14. Yes, will you make some?
15. Why do you ask when you know it's yours.

You might like to add to this list.

Discuss with students the fact that all refusals could be preceded by 'no'. Ask students to match each refusal with a request from the list of requests or composed by them and to provide a fitting context.

Discuss refusals as 'face threatening' acts and how such acts can be mitigated. Ask students to arrange the refusals in the order in which they 'threaten face' starting with the acts that are least threatening. Students will probably have different views on this order. Here is another opportunity for discussion.

(Suggestions for teaching speech acts are based on Rado, forthcoming.)

CONCLUSION

Exploring oral and written texts across the curriculum and across language offers manifold possibilities. In fact, the more closely one examines the field, the more riches it yields. What I have presented here is only a restricted selection of brief examples. It is my hope that this presentation might stimulate others to share in the enriching task of developing teaching strategies based on the lexical and pragmatic aspects of language. Teachers doing so should find that both they and their students will profit. Most importantly they will become acutely aware of how many functions language fulfils simultaneously. And that to my mind is part of the miracle of language.

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